

TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.—No. II.

THE
OLD AND THE MODERN
SCHOOL OF PHYSIC,

BY DR. S. EADON,
SHEFFIELD.

(Extracted from the Journal of Health.)

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No branch of knowledge has ever thriven on a false foundation. How great soever the genius and industry lavished upon it, and though centuries had been given to it, the result has always been inadequate to the efforts put forth. Not that these results have not been voluminous, learned, and ingenious—for these qualities have been more or less characteristic of every human research; but truth and error become so inextricably blended that one cannot be distinguished from the other. Take astronomy for an example. What region of imagination has not been laid under contribution to account for Planetary and Stellar phenomena? System upon system, cycle upon cycle, media, plena, centric upon concentric, have all had their advocates and enthusiasts, till Truth unveiled herself in beautiful simplicity, to the minds of Copernicus, Tycho, and Kepler, and stood forth in bold relief before the commanding glance of the immortal Newton. Having seized the golden thread, connecting earth and heaven, what has astronomy, the most difficult and exact of the sciences, not achieved? With a law of nature in one hand, and

the telescope in the other, astronomers have pierced the Heaven of Heavens, and detected the key-stone in the arch of the universe. Transcendent has been their success, and marvellous the daring of human genius. What has been effected in the domains of astronomy may be brought about in any other branch of science: but the basis of the superstructure must not be conjecture, or hypothesis, but the laws of nature, which are simple and immutable. Medicine, as a science, so called, is as old as astronomy itself, having been cultivated with great care from the earliest periods to the present time. There has been neither want of cases nor dearth of talent in this field of labour—for a long array of distinguished names adorn the annals of Medical literature. Yet medicine, as a system of CURE on the principle of "*contraria contrariis curantur*," is not one whit better now, than in the days of Hippocrates. Confined strictly to the Allopathic or old school of medicine, there are only some three or four substances which can be at all depended upon as specifics to disease; and these act, not on the principle of "*Contraria*," but on the law of "*Similia*." The rest of the practice is the wildest, boldest hap-hazard, blood-spoiling, and blood-draining empiricism. Not two medical men think alike on any case. Differing in opinion, each practitioner, or writer, asserts his views in a tone of solemn dogmatism. There never was a system pretending to be scientific and furnishing the means of subsistence, not to say the advantages of high position, to many tens of thousands, so interfused with conjecture, and so fretted with error. This may seem a startling assertion, when Colleges are chartered to teach its doctrines, and Royalty bedecks its *savans* with knighthood and baronetcy. What 'error in a system, so upheld by authority and surrounded by Academic glory!—where, and by whom is the statement made! Hear it, ye sons of *Æsculapius*, from the lips of your own brethren. Boerhaave, an illustrious name amongst you, says: "It would have been infinitely better for mankind if medical men had never existed." Dr. Pereira agrees in opinion with Sir Gilbert Blaine, "That in many cases, the patients get well IN SPITE OF THE MEANS EMPLOYED; and sometimes, when the practitioner fancies that he has made a great cure, we may fairly assume the patient to have had a HAPPY ESCAPE." Girtanner says, "The art of healing has no

fixed principle, and where *all is conjecture*, one conjecture is as good as another ;” and “ Who would waste his time in searching for a few particles of gold in that immense dung-hill which Physicians have been collecting for these 2,000 years.” Kieser says, “ The proverb is true that the remedy is worse than the disease, and the doctor more dangerous than the disorder.” Kriiger Hansen asserts, “ That medicine is a pestilence to mankind, and appears rather a means of preventing *over population* (!) than *THE ART OF SAVING LIVES*.” Professor Gregory used often to declare in his class-room “ That ninety-nine out of every hundred medical facts were so many medical lies, and that medical doctrines were for the most part *STARK STARING NONSENSE*.” Dr. Bushnan, the editor of the *Medical Times*, calmly tells the medical man to fold his arms and *look on* while nature does the work, “ for,” says he “ *the modern triumph of our art* (triumph forsooth!) is more in the happy forbearance exemplified in our negative treatment than in the positive success of any *heroic remedy*.”

The *Dublin Medical Journal* says, “ Assuredly the uncertain and most unsatisfactory art that we call *medical science* is no science at all, but a mere jumble of inconsistent opinions, of conclusions hastily and often incorrectly drawn, of acts misunderstood, or perverted, of comparisons without analogy, of hypotheses without reason, and of theories, not only useless, but dangerous.” Dr. James Johnson, in the *London Medical Chirurgical Review*, asserts it as “ His conscientious opinion, founded on long observation and reflection, that if there was not a single physician, or surgeon in the world, there would be less mortality than now prevails.” The celebrated Majendie says: “ Let us no longer wonder at the lamentable want of success which marks our practice, when there is *scarcely a sound physiological principle* amongst us.” Franke declares “ That thousands are annually slaughtered in the quiet sick room.” Dr. Paris, the present President of the Royal College of Physicians, acknowledges that “ The file of every apothecary would furnish a volume of instances where the ingredients of the prescriptions are fighting together in the dark ;” and Sir John Forbes, the last medical man knighted by Her Majesty, admits that “ the intermittent nature of disease must certainly be better understood *before we can practise medicine SCIENTIFICALLY*.”

“We could present rather a serious tragedy,” says the *Medical Gazette*, “if we were to collect all the cases of poisoning by huge masses of powerful medicines by the disciples of *this* physician, and of sanguinary homicide by the imitations of *that* bold surgeon, though they may both enjoy high repute.” Could all the consequences from the use of mercury alone be brought together, and comprehended in one view, it would be impossible for the human eye to look upon a scene of greater devastation and horror.”

Speaking of the abominations of mercurial drugging (and these are the words of a professor of the Old School of medicine to his students,) “to have recourse to such measures is a disgraceful reproach to the professor of medicine: it is quackery, horrid, unwarrantable, murderous quackery. What merit do gentlemen flatter themselves to possess by being able to salivate a patient? Cannot the veriest fools in Christendom salivate—give calomel? Who can stop the career of mercury at will, after it has taken the reins into its own destructive and ungovernable hands? He who for an ordinary cause resigns his patient to mercury is a VILE ENEMY TO THE SICK; and, if he is tolerably popular, will, in one successful season have paved the way for the business of life; for he has enough to do ever afterward to stop the mercurial breach of the constitutions of his dilapidated patients.” The same may be said of opium: by that drug thousands have died in a state of infancy, since, as Professor Christison says: “Young children are often peculiarly sensible of its poisonous action.” The illustrious Queen of Charles II. died by opium, although she repeatedly refused to take the prescribed dose at the hands of her physician. And the same may be said of what may be termed “your innocent medicines, as magnesia, manna, castor-oil, Epsom salts, senna, and that fashionable medicine, gamboge. “It seems passing strange,” says Professor Carlisle, “that grave men should persist in giving large doses of such medicines, to be daily reiterated in chronic and debilitated cases. Men, starting into the existence of the medical profession, from a cloistering study of books, and from abstract speculations; men, wholly unaware of the fallibility of medical evidence, and unversed in the doubtful effects of medicines, may be themselves deluded, and delude others for

a time ; but, where experience has proved them to be errors, it would be magnanimity, and yet no more than just, to renounce both the opinion and the practice '

What confessions ! and from the greatest minds and most successful practitioners in the old school of physic too ! The opponents of allopathy would not have had the hardihood to utter a tithe of such invective ; but " out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak."

Now, we appeal to any candid and thinking mind and ask, whether such a state of things could exist, had medicine been based on a *correct principle*, or on an ORGANIC LAW? Impossible. Truth is one ; error, multitudinous. It is lamentable to reflect upon the talent and industry uselessly wasted in this department of human knowledge—talent of the highest order, and industry, the most indomitable. It is the *system*, not the *men* that come under the ban of one's displeasure, the *thing practised* not *they who practise it*. Medical men honestly practise, no doubt, what they have been taught ; but as they are the CONSERVATORS of the public health, and feeling, as every right minded practitioner of the old school must feel, that in the language of Dr. Abercrombie, " He is obliged to grope his way in the dark," is it not his duty to avail himself of aught within or without the pale of the profession that might, by possibility, lead to a safer and more certain practice. Men of enlarged mind should emulate the example of the illustrious Newton, and be ready to learn, from every source, how humble soever it may be. For, after all, what is the object of medical practice? Is it not to cure? Certainly.

That restoration to health should be the object of every kind of treatment is admitted on all hands. To the honest practitioner, the MEANS, whether those of Hydropathy, of Homœopathy, or of Pharmacodynamic, Pyschology, are matters of little moment, if the end—HEALTH—be attained, for the " end crowns the work ;" yet, with this object in view, it is much to be regretted, that the profession has manifested so great an antipathy, not only against *parties* who might wish to make the UNKNOWN, the KNOWN, but against *substances even*, whether solid, liquid, or aeriform, if taken or applied by the advice of those without the pale of the profession. Quinine, the sheet-anchor of the old school of physic at present, and one of the few drugs whose action can be

depended upon by the Allopaths (and in *their* hands whenever *beneficial*, it is acting according to the Homœopathic law—being pathogenetic to the disease), had to encounter an army of medical swords, ere it was admitted into their arsenal of destructives. “Very few of the valuable discoveries in medicine,” says an old medical writer, “have been made by physicians (of the old school); they have in general been either the effect of chance or of necessity, and have always been opposed by the faculty, till everybody else was convinced of their importance.” To account for this, in the members of a Profession, who, by law, are the chartered alleviators of human suffering, is no easy matter. The Phrenologist would have to put his magic wand on several organs, and, by a happy combination, deduce the complex state which constitutes this somewhat strange mental phenomenon.

When a man is afflicted, he looks out, to the best of his ability, for a practitioner, most likely, to restore him to a state of health; one, who can throw around him those conditions which will soonest bring the functions from an abnormal to a normal action. To him, the means are a secondary consideration. He cares not two straws, whether the cure be effected according to the routine or old school practice, or that the means employed be as opposite as the poles asunder. Health is the goal; he is indifferent to the means, provided *that* be reached. Now, we ask, is the Allopathic practice (according to its own confessions replete with error) fitted to bring about so desirable a condition? Confession is condemnation: but assertion, we own, is not argument. Let us endeavour to shew how the old school practice operates when attempting to restore a diseased organism to a healthy condition.

In the first place, all Physiologists admit that there is inherent in the system a natural power of cure, the “*vis medicatrix naturæ*,” and that, in all cases, whenever a cure is effected, it is really, in virtue of this inborn principle. All that any mode of treatment can accomplish is either to intensify its action, or so to thwart its designs as to render it perfectly powerless. That system then, which can most effectively aid the intentions of this “*vis vitæ*” will, of necessity, be the best; that, which interferes, by throwing obstacles in the way, the worst. How does Allopathy view this principle in

PRACTICE, not in *theory*, for theoretically the cure-principle is at once admitted. An individual has got a disease, *i.e.* a bundle of symptoms which is not natural to him. The object of the Allopathic practice is to affect these symptoms,—to remove them, and a worthy object too. What is done? A large dose of combined drugs is 'given for the express purpose of setting up in the system a train of symptoms more violent than those which the drug is called upon to allay. A new disease is, in fact, set up, after the maxim of Galen: "*Contraria Contrariis Curantur.*"—The organism, instead of reacting against the morbid matters which give rise to the first set of symptoms, exerts all its powers, either to expel from the system, the poison thus introduced into it in massive doses; or to throw out an unusual amount of slime wherewith to envelop it. While this sliming-up process is going on, the symptoms of the original disease become less and less, fainter and more faint—till neither an atom of the morbid matter, the *secondary* cause of the original disease (for the primary cause is a derangement of the dynamic condition of the nervous system), nor an atom even of the recently admitted poison remains unenveloped, or unburied. Every molecule, in short, is beautifully slimed over—both old and new. The symptoms are all gone; the disease is cured; the last visit is paid; a mutual interchange of congratulations takes place; and the Doctor most complacently retires. How happy now the quondam patient—no pains—no uneasiness,—quite recovered. But stop! not too quick! In the body, a change in the corpuscular elements is constantly going on. The more rapid the change, the more vivid will be the life-principle in any given organism. Rapidity of change, in harmony with a sufficiency of supply, is, in fact, a state of perfect health. This change, owing to the action of the medicine, has gone on by slow degrees—scarcely perceptible indeed to the patient. After the effort of sliming over so much poison, the system settles down into a sort of calm. This repose, however, is more apparent than real; for, with every twinkling of the eye, every inspiration of the air, every radiant smile, and with the flight of every thought through the mysterious convolutions of the brain, change, in the relative molecular structure of the body, takes place. Change after change goes on, till, in time, the slimed-up particles are reached;

and they too, in time, require to be thrown out of the system. Many of them, however, CANNOT, for they have already passed into a state of induration ; having lost their vitality, they are rendered incapable, by virtue of the buried poison, of throwing out their own secretions : they have, in fact, died out organically. Now, from these changes, which nothing can prevent, new orders, of symptoms arise—partly from the hardened slime—partly from old worn-out particles which should have been eliminated long ago from the system, and partly from a disturbance in the solid depositions from massive doses of physic previously taken : all which particles, in the act of being unslimed, are, more or less, seeking an egress from the system. All this marching and counter-marching of whole armies of morbid particles traversing nerve, and muscle, and ganglion, and delicate tissues, and strands, give rise to sensations most exquisitely painful, and indescribable in their character—sensations which those alone know of, who have had the tic and the gout. In the paroxysm of anguish, which this disturbance in the system gives rise to, the medical man is, at once recalled—he who *cured* so nicely before ; the patient little thinking that the pain *now felt* is the result of the previous treatment—the effect of setting at defiance the organic laws under pretext of a scientific mode of practice. Drugs, in vilest compounds, in more massive doses, and essentially stronger, are given. The effect is astounding. The powers of the whole system are once more summoned into play. The system is in a fever of re-action ? The sliming up process again commences ; and the organism has to find secretions for three envelopings this time, viz, the solid depositions of both old and new physic ; the hardened slime ; and the worn out particles which could not get away, in consequence of the mode of treatment. In a few weeks, or months, it may be, the poor patient's symptoms once more abate. The sliming-up process is again nearly completed. Induration rapidly takes place ; the internal burial is completed ; the pain is gone ; the symptoms are removed ; and there is nothing left but weakness—a natural result, the recent call on the organism to repel or slime up the poison having been so great. Now comes once more the *repose of health* ! Wronged nature, however, soon cries aloud against such mockery, such deception, such heaping-up of Pelion upon Ossa.

Immense delusion ! The law of change, in the atomic fabric of the body, has been going on the while, although little felt. The period, however, arrives when the last parts slimed up require again to be disturbed ; particle after particle comes into motion, and a kind of vermicular movement is felt throughout the system. Fresh symptoms arise ; new pains are felt ; and these more intense than ever. The medical man is hurriedly summoned. He *now* fires red-hot shot from larger pounders, in the form of mercury, opium, and what not, till the poor patient is reduced, in the language of Professor Chapman, "to the last stages of a wretched existence ; emaciated to a skeleton, with both sides of the skull almost completely perforated in many places ; the nose half gone, with rotten jaws, ulcerated throat, breath most pestiferous, more intolerable than the poisonous upas ; limbs racked with the pains of the inquisition ; mind as imbecile as the puny babe, a burden to himself, and a disgusting spectacle to others." What a process ! and all done with a notion forsooth, of RESTORING TO HEALTH. Is it not monstrous ? Law, where is thy power that such would-be Science is not put down ! Common sense ! hast thou fled from the human mind for ever ! Well might Shakespere say, "Throw physic to the dogs," to the EARTH we say, and let it be absorbed by our common parent, for CANINE INSTINCT YET REMAINS, and would refuse the nauseous drug.

Allopathy then, or the old drug system, by acting on the Galenic maxim "*Contraria contrariis curantur*," i.e. the setting up of a disease, greater than the one to be cured ; by its wholesale methods of poisoning and blood-letting ; by the sliming-up process which the poison inevitably induces, destroying the life of the parts beneath it ; and by stopping that indispensable process, a rapid change, in the molecules of the body, in which alone HEALTH consists, is evidently founded on false principles, and as a system of cure, is antagonistic *in toto* to the laws of the human organism.

If then, as we have shewn, the old practice of physic is inimical to natural law, is there any wonder that other modes should be tried ? Many worthy men have left the allopathic school in disgust, feeling they could no longer conscientiously practise its dogmas. Hahnemann, the founder of Homœopathy, was one of that class ; and, while amusing himself with chemical expe-

riments, discovered the law of *similia similibus curantur*, or that "like cures like;"—a law, that will hand down his name to an admiring posterity, and prove one of the mightiest principles ever evoked by genius from the arcana of nature for the benefit of man. Already the principle is marching with rapid strides. It has its chairs, its professors, and its practitioners. In India, Australia, Great Britain, on the continent of Europe, and in wide-awake America, Homœopathy is extensively practised.* Indeed, in some towns of America, there are more Homœopathic than Allopathic practitioners. Truth *will* spread. Colleges may try to balk her, and authority may scowl upon her, but onward she will stalk irrespective of either. Is Homœopathy one of the phases of TRUTH? Can she, in her efforts at cure, intensify the conservative principle—the *vis vitæ* of the human system? If not, the new is no better than the old practice; for, in every case, nature cures herself; and the point is, whether in these efforts, she can be assisted or not. Induction alone can answer the question; uniformity of effect must be the result of a natural law. Now, the Homœopathic law, from the uniformity of its effects, is clearly a dynamic principle, intended by the Creator, when applied in harmony with His other laws, to give intensity to the curative power implanted in the human organism. A drug given in a state of health, and producing certain symptoms, will remove analogous symptoms in a diseased condition, and so intensify the inherent medical power, as presently to bring about a normal condition. This is found invariably to be the case. In the *Materia Medica Pura*, every medicine has been tested in the most faithful manner on the healthy subject. In no case has the Baconian method of induction had a fairer trial, or been attended with happier results. The Homœopath knows for a certainty what symptoms each of the 200 drugs will produce; and, as "like cures like," he can, with the certainty of natural law, remove all analogous states of body. There can be no error in the LAW—no error in the EFFECTS of the drug; if error ever arise, it is in the *selection* of the drug; and that is man's want of knowledge, and evinces no variableness or uncertainty in a

* In 1852, there were 1,500 Homœopathic practitioners in the United States of America.

God-developed principle. There is no mixing of medicines in the New school of physic. One drug only is given at once ; its effects are watched, perhaps, for forty days, and the result is known long before the system has reached the expected condition. Here is a *law*, then, clearly in harmony with the other *laws* of nature. It is the discovery of a natural relationship existing between certain conditions of the animal organism. Thousands practise upon the Hahnemann principle with the thorough conviction of successful treatment. They feel to be no longer QUACKS with diplomas in their hands, but MEN acting on the UNERRING PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL LAW.

The smallness of the dose given in Homœopathic practice seems to be a stumbling-block to those who have not thought on these matters. We must bear in mind, that the great motive power is in the nervous system. The *heart* itself acts in obedience to this power ; and every ganglion and every plexus performs its function in virtue of the power derived from this source. Now, the strands of the nervous system are so minute and attenuated as to be far beyond microscopic perception. Upon the normal or abnormal condition of the finest tissues of this wondrously attenuated piece of mechanism, health and disease alike depend. On this more than cob-web structure assimilation, in its effects, performs its wonders ; and here, too, disease begins to hold her orgies.

The more obvious the symptoms, the less does disease retreat within the interior meshes of this delicately strandulated system ; the more subtile and complicated the symptoms, the farther has it penetrated within its innermost tissues. Nervous strands or threads, composed of the finest, perhaps, of the ultimate elements of organic matter, can only be affected, by dividing and subdividing inorganic matter, either by way of trituration or succussion, till reduced to molecules as small as those upon which they are intended to act. A large dose, then, even when given according to the Homœopathic law, would mostly pass off by assimilation through the alimentary canal, thereby leaving the most delicate fabrics of the nervous system unaffected. The dose, by being large, rouses the whole secreting energies of the system ; and no rest is obtained, till, in a great measure, the enemy is expelled. In short, combined in a mass,

atoms obey the law of cohesion, and are almost powerless; but, when triturated and subjected to repeated solutions, their electric or odyllic force becomes so developed, as to be almost beyond belief, were not facts constantly teeming upon the mind of the Homœopath in his every-day practice. So delicate, then, is the nervous system of man, that a *large dose*, even when given according to the law of "like cures like," is calculated to do *some injurg*, as the drug would not only go to the part affected, but, given in overdose, affect parts that were healthy, and in this may bring on a slightly diseased condition.

It is not, then, upon BONES and MUSCLES that *matter* in its highest forms can act, either in health or in disease; but only upon the strandulous meshes of a finely nerve-webbed economy. The nearer we approach the domains of the INNER MAN, the more evanescent must be the forms of matter given, if intended to act powerfully on structures so finely organized.

Hahnemann, then, will wear a double crown. He not only discovered the "law of cure," which will rank him with the God-sent sons of genius; but, that the *smallest doses* can act more powerfully on a susceptible organism, and restore to health sooner and better than the same remedy administered in Allopathic measure. Well, then what is to be done? Shall we follow Homœopathy or Allopathy? Shall we submit to be treated by a hap-hazard method, or by one in harmony with Nature's laws. If one section of the medical profession *will* practise a system which kills, according to its own confessions, more than armies destroy, will it not be wise in parties to follow the advice of Sir B. Brodie, "and consult anybody we please about our own case?"

On medical matters a great change has come over public opinion. Medical men perceive it. Less physic is given, less blood abstracted, and fewer solemn faces are drawn when called in. This alone will not do. The people are awake, wide awake, and, what is terrible to some minds, very knowing in matters beyond their calling. They shrewdly suspect that Allopathy is WRONG IN PRINCIPLE, and will, ere long, demand a change, by employing those only who cure by simple and natural means. Allopathy is doomed; the flag is struck; the wise leap from the sinking ship. No half

measures will do. The profession will be compelled to embrace Homœopathy and Hydropathy as the great curapowers of Nature. Hydropathy cleanses the system from the accumulations of effete matter which the violations of natural and organic laws necessarily entail; electro-psychology restores the equilibrium of the odylic fluid, and even gives intensity to the “vis vitæ” itself; while Homœopathy, by its subtile dynamizations and emanations, acts on the refined and evanescent medium which connects spirit with body, and which, in its normal conditton, constitutes the **LIFE OF THE BODY**. The time is not far distant when an odyloimeter will be invented; and the human body be charged with the odylic fluid with the same ease as we charge the galvanic pile. The day of the impossible is over. The past is gone, with its gloom, its ignorance, and its superstition. To live on the *past*, is living amid mummies. The future is the vista for the present age; and, so long as two sounds can be so arranged as to generate **SILENCE**; two lights, to produce *darkness*: **LIGHT ITSELF**, to turn artists, and electricity to tell its tale of wonders in eight seconds around earth’s circumference, nothing is impossible. Man is a mighty being, and not a tithe of his mental greatness has been developed. His beginning, history records; his progress is in the bosom of time; but his glorious and God-like end who can foreshadow?

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